

Eng.

Z O B E I D E.

23

A

T R A G E D Y.

As it is Acted at the
THEATRE-ROYAL in COVENT-GARDEN.

———*deserta per ardua dulcis*
Raptat Amor. VIRG.

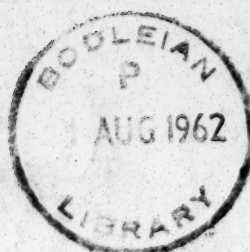
THE THIRD EDITION.

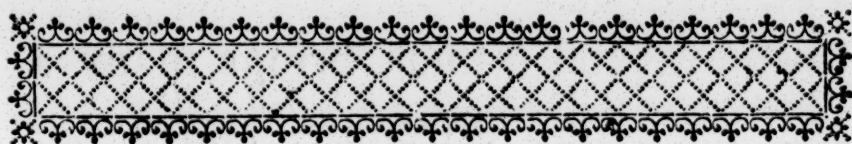


L O N D O N :

Printed for T. CADELL in the Strand,
MDCCLXII.

Vet. A 5 e. 3819





TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
LADY SCARSDALE.

MADAM,

I KNOW not whether mankind can be said to have less Vanity—but of this I am certain, that they have infinitely more Delicacy—formerly, Dedicators met with few difficulties in addressing their Patrons——They made them every thing that was wise and good, and their Patrons, in return, (though they might not approve the production) yet gave their authors an entire credit for a clear insight into human nature.

But contraband traffick brings many a good trade into disrepute, and a fair dealer has now often only a limited opportunity of vending his just merchandise. How hard then is the condition of us modern Dedicators ! To lavish encomiums where they are not due, is not the fashion of the times ; and now, (when the Subject demands, and there is the fairest opportunity of expatiating on the most exemplary Character) I have your LADYSHIP's express prohibition—But public disorders frequently bring the seeds of remedy along with them—If I had spoken as I ought, it had been called an UNIVERSAL opinion, (and your LADYSHIP perceives, by this address, that I affect singularity ;) but should I in the least have failed, the world would have loudly exclaimed, that

I had

DEDICATION.

iii

I had said too LITTLE, and your LADYSHIP still more unjustly have censured me, for having said too MUCH.

I have the honour to be, with the greatest regard,

Your LADYSHIP'S

Sincere friend, and

Obliged servant,

J. CRADOCK.

PROLOGUE.

Written by Dr. GOLDSMITH.

Spoken by Mr. QUICK.

*IN these bold times, when Learning's sons explore
The distant climate and the savage shore ;
When wise Astronomers to India steer,
And quit for Venus, many a brighter here ;
While Botanists, all cold to smiles and dimpling,
Forsake the fair, and patiently—go simpling ;
When every bosom swells with wond'rous scenes,
Priests, cannibals, and hoity-toity queens :
Our bard into the general spirit enters,
And fits his little frigate for adventures :
With Scythian stores, and trinkets deeply laden,
He this way steers his course, in hopes of trading—
Yet ere he lands he 'as ordered me before,
To make an observation on the shore.
Where are we driven ? Our reck'ning sure is lost !
This seems a barren and a dangerous coast.
Lord what a sultry climate am I under !
Yon ill-foreboding cloud seems big with thunder.
(Upper Gallery.)*

There

PROLOGUE.

*There Mangroves spread, and larger than I've seen
'em——* (Pit.)

Here trees of stately size—and turtles in 'em—
(Balconies.)

Here ill-condition'd oranges abound— (Stage.)

*And apples (takes up one and tastes it) bitter apples
strew the ground.*

The place is uninhabited I fear ;

I heard a hissing—there are serpents here !

O there the natives are—a dreadful race !

The men have tails, the women paint the face !

No doubt they're all barbarians—Yes, 'tis so,

*I'll try to make palaver with them though ; (making
'Tis best however keeping at a distance. signs)*

Good Savages, our Captain craves assistance ;

*Our ship's well stor'd ;—in yonder creek we've laid
her,*

His honour is no mercenary trader ;

This is his first adventure, lend him aid,

Or you may chance to spoil a thriving trade.

His goods he hopes are prime, and brought from far,

Equally fit for gallantry and war.

What no reply to promises so ample ?

I'd best step back—and order up a sample.

D R A-

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

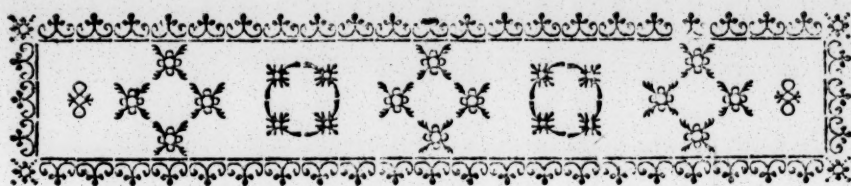
M E N.

HERMODON, Chief of a Canton in Scythia,	}	Mr. CLARKE.
INDATER, Son to Her- modon,	}	Mr. SAVIGNY.
ATHAMAND, Prince of Persia,	}	Mr. SMITH.
SEYFEL, an ancient ge- neral banished from Persia,	}	Mr. HULL.
HASAN, friend to Athamand,		Mr. OWENSON.

W O M E N.

ZOBEIDE,	Mrs. YATES.
SULMA,	Mrs. VINCENT.

SCYTHIANS, PERSIANS.



Z O B E I D E.

John A. Southery

T R A G E D Y.



A C T I.

S C E N E I.

The SCENE represents rocks and trees, with a distant view of the river Oxus.

HERMODON, INDATER, Scythians.

HERMODON.



HENCE this daring insult?

What strangers these, who, with intrusive march,

Have pass'd the summits of high Imaus' rocks?
Mean they to ravage on the banks of Oxus,
Or spoil the plains of innocence and peace?

B

INDATER.

I N D A T E R.

Our troops, whose minds no dangers can appal,
 Observing from afar some hasty steps,
 Advance with eager speed.—The Persians meet us;
 When straight a martial youth, with haughty mien,
 Demanded of us parley with our master.

H E R M O D O N.

What master know we here, where all are free?
 No kings, no subjects; but all friends and brothers.

I N D A T E R.

He said, that visiting the Persian frontier,
 He wish'd to see a people far renown'd
 For ancient manners and bleak liberty:
 We offer them safe conduct and protection;
 Whilst they present to our astonish'd sight
 Rich trappings, blazing shields, gold, diamonds,
 pearls,
 The guilty spoils of desolating war:
 But we reject these specious toys of grandeur;
 For poverty is chiefest grandeur here,
 Not wealth, corrupter of simplicity,
 In short, we swear an amity sincere,
 And lo! they come to crown this prosp'rous day,
 Which gives me happiness and Zobeide.

H E R M O D O N.

HERMODON.

But Zobeide, thou know'st, whose blooming charms
Have won thy soul—was born among the Persians!

INDATER.

The sun, which rises o'er yon eastern hill,
And which each morn we gratefully adore,
Shines not on us alone——It shines on Persia:
Then may not Persia boast its ray divine?

HERMODON.

Thou little know'st the secrets of my heart;
Since, after four long years in friendship past,
I still am stranger to her father's story——
What fate mysterious lur'd him to these climes;
Why persecution still attends his exile;
For, ever as I'd sooth him into converse,
He answers but with tributary tears.

INDATER.

To this fair country's maxims and her laws
He cheerfully submits—and way-worn age
Can rarely change the bent of early nature.
But fairest Zobeide—

HERMODON.

Is worthy of thee.
And yet I cannot guess the cause, her father

Blushes to speak of whom he is descended ;
His rank, his fortunes, and his fame unknown.

I N D A T E R.

Whoe'er he be, I'm sure he's just and valiant :
He loves me——He is father to my Zobeide.

H E R M O D O N.

As no vile aims debase a Scythian's mind,
We will not meanly stoop to ask a prize,
The brightest, fairest prize, whilst covert fears
Or foul distrust sit low'ring on our motives.
Seek him, my son—if no unworthy thoughts
Shall harbour in his breast—I will consent.
But see he comes—

Enter S E Y F E L.

I N D A T E R.

O generous old man !

Thou dear companion of our happy shepherds !
This day some gallant youths will soon arrive,
And view with joy the festive rites that wait us ;
I from thy hand this happy day receive
A gift more precious than the throne of Cyrus :
What age of service can repay such goodness !
I cannot speak the feelings of my heart.

Witness

Witness, ye Gods!—not Hermodon more shares
My duty or my love:—Ah! whence those tears?

S E Y F E L.

They flow from tendernefs and former cares :
If, amidst all my griefs, this faithful union
Should heal some wound which rankles near my
heart,
The scar would still remain—For blessings oft
Recal to mind the evils we have suffer'd.

I N D A T E R.

O! speak the fatal source of each misfortune ;
If not redress, we may at least infuse
The sacred balm of sympathizing pity.

H E R M O D O N.

For all the friendship we have firmly sworn,
Thou ow'st this tribute to us.

S E Y F E L.

My gentle youth,
Zobeide, thou know'st, submits her will to mine ;
She is the only good the Gods have left me :
I wish this marriage—I'll advise, persuade,
But cannot strain the bond of rightful sway,
The soft authority of friend and parent.

Go,

Go, thou dear hope of my declining age,
 I would some private conf'rence here—Meanwhile,
 Artless as native truth, still urge thy suit,
 Obtain her promise, and depend on mine.

[Exit Indater.

Ere I begin the story of my life,
 Let me gaze round with grateful rapture here :
 Believe me, Hermodon—these rocks, these trees,
 To me seem nobler than the Persian court.

HERMODON.

Thou once wast great ?

SEYFEL.

I was.

HERMODON.

Too long, my friend,
 Thy griefs pent up, have prey'd upon thy heart :
 I do not hate the great—I love the Persians;
 Their laws and noble manners I admire ;
 Tho' all mankind at first were equal born,
 I strictly hold that subjects should obey
 Those whom their Gods make delegates of pow'r :
 Simplicity's soft charms, in this republic,
 Are no fit lessons for monarchic states.

Could'st

Could'st thou suppose that I was less attach'd
Because in Scythia—

SEYFEL.

If I have long conceal'd
The source of my misfortunes—pardon me,
Pardon a parent's doubts—I'd lost my all:
My child here wander'd friendless—unprotected—
I fear'd the foul disgraces of her father
Would fall on her, and stain her rising glory.

HERMODON.

Forbear thy tears.

SEYFEL.

Know then, that under Cyrus
I carried terror to th' affrighted nations.
Hircania bow'd her neck unto my yoke,
Hircania free till then.

HERMODON.

Most harsh the chains
Which gall the stubborn neck of liberty!

SEYFEL.

Oppression's arts, unworthy of the brave
To be the Prince's slave, t' enslave his people,

To

To crouch, or cruelly exact obedience,
 Dazzled a while—but now demand repentance.
 The noble Cyrus, with a lavish hand,
 Would heap on me full measure of rewards ;
 I ever was the partner of his counsels—
 But Cyrus died—and I was soon forgotten.
 Cambyfes I abandon'd—impious man !
 Unworthy successor of such a father !
 Ecbatan, as yet the abode of Media's Prince,
 At her new court conceal'd my hoary head,
 Till Smerdis, governing the Median realm,
 Smerdis, who sought the ruin of the virtuous,
 Gave a decisive blow to all my hopes ;
 The unbridled Athamand, his sister's son,
 In firm alliance with a noble princess,
 Whom Persia's court had destin'd to his love,
 (His tyrant passions brooking no controul,)
 Demanded Zobeide as despotic master.

HERMODON.

And did his life repay the glaring outrage ?

SEYFEL.

Thrice arm'd with innocence, th' undaunted fair
 Compell'd our flight into this distant land ;
 By me alone she was deliver'd from him ;

The

The monsters, who surround the impious Smerdis,
 More than their common arts employ'd against us;
 With fairest colours hid the worst designs,
 And couch'd the dagger, lab'ring to destroy us.
 In Media it is treason, as at Babylon,
 To brand the prince who next must fill the throne.

HERMODON.

O dire effects of hell-born servitude!
 Is then complaint a crime in Persia's court?
 Can you regret the loss of basest grandeur?

SEYFEL.

There you awake the thought which wrings my
 heart.
 Smerdis proscrib'd my life—they seiz'd—they shar'd
 Employments—wealth—the price of all my service.
 My faithful child accompanied my flight;
 With patient steps we labour'd up the steep
 Of Taurus' craggy cliffs, whose o'erhung brow
 Indignant frowns upon the boist'rous main.
 Wearied by toils—thanks to the pitying Gods!
 In these fair climes we found unhop'd-for peace:
 Would I had here been born! All *my* regret
 Is to have run a desperate mad career
 In courts and camps, attendant upon kings.

C

But

But I perceive my child shut up in desarts,
 Regrets the pleasures of her former life ;
 And much I fear that reason, filial duty,
 Combat too weakly each delusive vision :
 Courts and their pomp will fascinate our eyes
 Ere bitter ills annoy the sick'ning soul.

HERMODON.

What ills await you here ? ah ! what regret ?
 With us she's free, applauded—honour'd—
 No lurking dangers taint this hallow'd soil,
 Here liberty has fixt her blest abode,
 And looks with pity down upon the great.

SEYFEL.

Oh ! I should die content, if my dear child
 Hated, like me, the perfidy of courts :
 But let not my inquietudes repress
 The dawning joys that beam upon thy son.
 Conceal them from him.

Enter INDATER.

Zobeide is mine ;

The blooming maid accepts my earnest suit ;
 Let not my father or his generous friend
 Frown on my fate, and I am blest indeed !

HERMO-

HERMODON.

Our wish, my son, is to behold thee happy.

SEYFEL.

Auspicious hour ! I feel my life renew ;
A second spring shoots through my aged veins,
And makes me hope return of better days.

Enter SCYTHIANS in haste.

SCYTHIAN.

As late I watch'd my flocks on yonder hills,
A splendid troop pass'd by—their chief, I find,
(Whose turban glitter'd on his cloudy brow)
Is bound to search an aged warrior out,
Who formerly was known in Media's camps ;
Demands of us the place where he's conceal'd—
Th' unfortunate old man he long has sought for.

HERMODON.

O heav'ns ! let him pursue him to these arms !

INDATER.

He there is shelter'd whilst I live to guard him.

SCYTHIAN.

The gen'rous Persian comes not to defy
A race of shepherds innocent as brave ;

His breast seems lab'ring with some weighty grief;
 Perhaps a banish'd man, some hardy warrior
 Who flies a court unmindful of his service :
 Perhaps——

Second SCYTHIAN.

'Tis said, that half worn out with cares,
 He only seeks a safe retreat from danger ;
 Weeps the past horrors of malignant fate,
 And grateful hails the dawn of rising freedom.

HERMODON.

His tears are more suspicious than his presents.
 Pardon my anxious doubts—I fear the Persians ;
 These brilliant slaves are willing to betray us.
 Thee, my best friend, perhaps they seek for here :
 Perhaps the tyrant at thy flight enrag'd,
 Demands thy rated life——A spotless chief
 Must sometimes bleed to save the guilty prince.

SEYFEL.

Forgetting princes in these happier climes,
 I am forgotten too—I fear them not.

INDATER.

We'll perish all, ere this indignant stranger
 Shall offer insult to my more than father.

HERMO-

HERMODON.

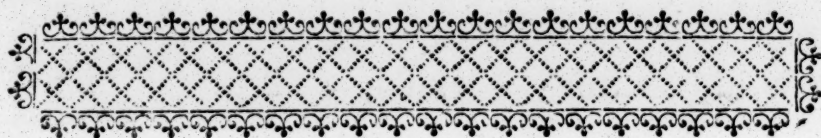
Whoe'er he be, I shall not shun his walks :
If bold, chastise ; if exil'd, we'll protect him.

INDATER.

Let him come on—he shall not cloud our joys ;
A Scythian's heart is steel'd 'gainst panic terrors.
Prepare the altar for th' approaching nuptials ;
Place round it ev'ry gift of bounteous Nature,
And there present the hand that combats for thee ;
[To Seyfel.

No cares intrude ; and may th' immortal Gods
Bending from high to hear our plighted vows,
Propitious smile on this important hour,
That gilds or darkens all my future days.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.



A C T II.

Z O B E I D E, S U L M A.

S U L M A.

BUT what are your resolves ?

Z O B E I D E.

Here to remain,
And pass my days in this wild savage desert.
They shall not see me wearied with an effort
To wait the death of a determin'd father ;
Not irritate a power which condemns him.
When to these climes our flight was first propos'd,
A thousand horrid fears besieg'd my fancy ;
But time has reconcil'd these drear abodes :
'Tis no more Zobeide at a court ador'd,
No more the Persians, jealous of my smiles,
Pursue the footsteps of declining beauty ;
I've sworn a total change of life and manners,
My only pride to emulate a father.

S U L M A.

S U L M A.

Your virtue far surpasses your misfortunes ;
In your abasement I behold your grandeur ;
I must admire you all ;—is your heart fixt
To shun the climes where nature gave you birth ?
When dangers threaten, or when ills impend,
We shun the country which disturbs our quiet ;
But soon, the clouds dispers'd, we feel regret,
We feel for pleasures which we never knew,
And nature triumphs o'er our vanquish'd fears.

Z O B E I D E.

From the loud raging of a vengeful storm
Heav'n grants this gloomy shelter—here, my friend,
Now all-resign'd, awhile I will endure,
Nor shall you longer share my adverse fortunes :
Among those friends, who have abandon'd me,
You'll find some mind compassionate enough
To recompense the gratitude I owe you.
Go, my dear Sulma, leave me to my fate—
Review proud Ecbatan's most happy people,
And in these desarts leave your faithful Zobeide.

S U L M A.

Rather let sudden death pursue such perfidy,
If ever I conceive the base design,

Remote

Remote from you to court ignoble grandeur :
 I forfeit all for you :—your destiny,
 E'en to the tomb, is closely link'd with mine :
 But yet I own, with horror and surprize,
 I see those charms, which monarchs should adore,
 Ignobly lavish'd on a Scythian peasant.

Z O B E I D E.

When I reflect on the indignant outrage
 Done to my youth, my family, and name,
 A fatal offspring of th' immortal Cyrus ;
 Banish'd for ever from the Persian court,
 For ever bound to curse the faithless Athamand ;
 When these fell woes are summon'd to my view,
 All human things are equal to my eyes ;
 All are indifferent.

S U L M A.

Useless constraint !

Do those deep sighs betray a tranquil mind ?

Z O B E I D E.

Cease to disturb the vows I've sworn to heav'n ;
 I never will review my native land ;
 If my frail heart would swerve from duty's path,
 It must be bound in chains which can't be broken.

Z O B E I D E.

17

S U L M A.

Th' unhappy father's voluntary victim,
With what reproaches can you load your mind?

Z O B E I D E.

With none.—Gods! I renew my vows—never—
Ye never shall behold the guilt of Zobeide.

S U L M A.

Your choice is made then?

Z O B E I D E.

All is fixt.—My father
Prefers the son of his most faithful friend.

S U L M A.

Can Zobeide?—

Z O B E I D E.

Behold the sacred altar!

[The back scene opens
and discloses the altar.

My happier friends, without regret, prepare
Those fatal chains, which bind these hands for ever.

Enter I N D A T E R.

Where is the lovely bride?—the rites await—
Impatience chides the tardiness of age,

D

Whose

Whose frozen foot imprints the rocky soil !
 O let me hear thee speak !—read in those eyes
 That I'm the happy object of thy choice !
 Marriage with us is as a link of nature
 Form'd between souls most liberal and pure :
 A warlike youth entreats a warrior's daughter ;
 Will she partake his travels and his fortunes,
 Attend his combats, or avenge his death ?
 Shall Scythia rival Persia in her pride,
 And I receive the world's best gift in Zobeide ?

Z O B E I D E.

I know thy virtues, and esteem thy valour,
 Thy open candour, and thy generous heart ;
 I promise thee, I've promis'd too my father—
 His choice and mine are sureties for the treaty.

I N D A T E R.

You speak a language foreign to my soul ;
 And whilst you make me blest, destroy the blessing.
 'Tis said, within the walls of Ecbatan,
 Those eyes have spread a lustre through the court ;
 But tell me, Zobeide—is it my misfortune,
 Did heav'n ordain thee to adorn a throne ?

Z O B E I D E.

It is not thy misfortune—it is mine—

My

My memory retraces not my glory—
I have forgotten all.

INDATER.

Still more ador'd,
Forget it if thou can'st—it lives with me:
Can'st thou, contented, view this rustic shrine,
The sacred monument of ancient worship?
Here do our fathers pay their grateful off'rings,
Not such as useless smoke in prouder climes,
But nature's gifts, fair emblems of their hearts.

Z O B E I D E.

That mind must surely err, whose narrow scope
Confines religion to a place or clime;
A Power unknown, that actuates the world,
Whose eye is just, whose ev'ry thought is wisdom,
Regards alone the tribute of the heart:
Pride in his awful sight shrinks back appall'd;
Humility is eldest born of virtue,
And claims her birth-right at the throne of heav'n.

INDATER.

Some Persians newly landed on our shores
Wish to partake our sports—They'll wond'ring
view
A people all united but by virtue.

D 2

Z O B E I D E.

Z O B E I D E.

Persians ! What sayst thou ? Persians—

I N D A T E R.

Thou tremblest,

Can Zobeide fear to view a race of slaves ?

Z O B E I D E.

Oh ! my dear Sulma !

S U L M A.

See your father comes—

I N D A T E R.

Our parents, friends, thy faithful choice compa-
nions,

All come to consecrate the solemn feast.

Z O B E I D E,

Away then ; I obey.

[To Sulma,

Enter SEYFEL, HERMODON, SCY-
THIANS.

H E R M O D O N.

Behold the Altar ;

The sacred flame of nature and of love,

Our solemn rites, as simple as ourselves.

S E Y F E L,

Z O B E I D E.



S E Y F E L.

Thy father's hand prefers a noble youth ;

Let truth and honour ratify the vow.

[Indater and Zobeide lay their hands upon the altar,

E P I T H A L A M I U M.

(The Music composed by Mr. F I S H E R.)

FROM Imaus' proud top, great Vesta, hear,
Propitious Goddess of the fruitful year.
For thee behold our purest victims bleed,
The spotless heifer and the milk-white steed.
Hear, Vesta, hear thy humble suppliant's pray'r,
And pour thy blessings on the plighted pair.

A I R.

Mr. REINHOLD.

Mild Goddess, hear their mutual vow,
And smile upon their nuptial hour ;
Here all thy richest gifts bestow,
And strew their path with ev'ry flow'r.

C H O R U S.

Hear, Vesta, hear thy humble suppliant's pray'r,
And pour thy blessings on the plighted pair.

A I R.



Z O B E I D E,

A I R.

Mrs. WOODMAN.

“ May mutual truth, with purest light,
“ Fair emblem of thy sacred fire,
“ Burn ever steady, ever bright,
“ And but with life itself expire.

C H O R U S.

“ Hear, Vesta, hear thy humble suppliant's pray'r,
“ And pour thy blessings on the plighted pair.

I N D A T E R.

I swear to you, my country, and myself,
To th' eternal Gods—the object I adore,
To love still more, e'en as encreasing time
Shall onward lead us through life's chequer'd
paths;
Ever more faithful—ever more sincere,
To live, to combat, or to die, for her.

Z O B E I D E.

To your high laws, ye pow'rs, I here submit—
I swear to be to him—Gods!—Who is't I see!

Enter

Enter ATHAMAND, HASAN, and PERSIANS.

INDATER.

What sudden terror hath besieg'd her soul?
My fairest friends, O! hasten to her succour.

[Ex. Zobeide, Indater, and Scythians.]

ATHAMAND.

Stay, Scythians, stay, O! Seyfel, hear me speak.

SEYFEL.

To what am I reserv'd? accurst misfortune!

ATHAMAND.

Know'st thou me not?

SEYFEL.

Too well—What mad persuasion
Conducts thy erring steps to these retreats?
Thy monarch set a price upon my head;
Would'st thou demand it?—Do,—misguided man!
But tremble for thy own.—I stand amaz'd
To see thee brave a race that fear not kings.

ATHAMAND.

O! people, fam'd for justice, hear me speak;
'Tis Cyrus' nephew makes you judge between us!

HERMODON.

Nephew to Cyrus! and among the Scythians!

ATHAMAND.

ATHAMAND.

Stern justice leads me on—In vain you threaten,
 Unfortunate old man—In me behold
 Thy future stay—the comfort of thy age.
 'Tis true, a monarch robb'd thee of thy fame;
 A sentence most unjust prevail'd against thee.
 Scythians, that monarch is no more—I flew
 With wings of speed to bring th' important news:
 Thou shalt partake my treasures and my pow'r.
 What prince before did ever quit a throne,
 To trace the footsteps of an injur'd friend?
 Hear me then, Seyfel—hear thy country's voice;
 Yield to a monarch's suit, a monarch's vows,
 Yield to these tears, which speak my deep remorse.

SEYFEL.

Thou can'st not hence seduce me, *generous* Atha-
 mand;
 If deep remorse had struck thy thorny breast,
 Or meek repentance worn thy soul with care,
 Spite of the ills I'd felt, I ought to pardon.
 But O! I trace the source of this distraction;
 It cannot be for me those tears are shed:
 Leave me then, Athamand—my doom is fixt:
 Here will I languish out a weary life,

And die with holy freedom—Lead on, my friends—
The ties shall be redoubled that unite us.

[Ex. Hermodon, Seyfel, and Scythians.

A T H A M A N D.

I stand immoveable—O heaven! O destiny!
O! fatal passion, bent on my destruction!
Gone! Is he fled?—would he not stay to hear?
The fiercest Dæmon of infernal vengeance
Might glut his rage to see a monarch humbled.
But say, my Hasan, why yon altar burns?
Those lights? those garlands?—Why the nuptial
torch?
A woman too was dragg'd in haste away
At our approach—Ye pow'rs! What have I seen?
Remorse will change to an avenging fury!
Gods, steel my injur'd heart!

H A S A N.

Think where you are;
Your grandeur serves but to inflame their fierce-
ness;
They know how to defend——vengeance they
adore——
They pardon not, if once they are offended.

ATHAMAND.

I scorn them all—I've seen them in our camps,
Their stoutest warriors, and their ablest men;
A lifeless race compar'd with Persian troops.

HASAN.

But sovereigns 'mong themselves—

ATHAMAND.

Why wilt thou thwart
My stern resolves,—the transports that inflame
me!

My passions bear me on, and reason not——
Had I us'd reason I had ne'er been here!
Zobeide might drag me to earth's utmost verge;
Her loaded slave now brings again his chains,
To chain himself to fortune that pursues him,
To snatch her from a most indignant slav'ry,
Which this old man imposes on her youth,
To die then at her feet with love or madness,
If this torn heart can never soften her's.

HASAN.

Hear but a moment—

ATHAMAND.

I will not hear.

HASAN.

Stay.

ATHAMAND.

Why stay?

This vile, this ignominious rival
Insults my woes, and outrages my honour.
To make him master of all earthly blessings?
I cannot take alarm too soon, my friend;
A peasant here is pois'd against a monarch;
Can any parent force a choice so vile?—
She is possess'd of nobleness of soul,
Nor can demean herself to wed a slave.

HASAN.

Pride is inconstant—she—

ATHAMAND.

Raise no foul doubts.

If pity cannot move her wretched father—
My tears despis'd, he trembles at my anger.
A prince is but a man, and man may err;
But when forgetting his ennobled rank,
He makes due reparation for his faults,
From heaven he pardon hopes, from man de-
mands it.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.



A C T I I I.

S C E N E I.

ATHAMAND, HASAN.

ATHAMAND.

I Knew it was—I could foresee it all—
 Gods! could it be Zobeide?

HASAN.

At your approach

Fear and amazement shook that beauteous form,
 And life itself stood trembling on her cheek;
 But in those moments with a fault'ring voice,
 She tenderly pronounc'd the name of Media.
 A Scythian told me this—a hardy youth,
 Who once beneath our honour'd banners fought.
 The father and the husband now are with her.

ATHAMAND.

The husband! Who?

HASAN.

H A S A N.

The valiant Indater,
The hope and glory of this fam'd republic,
To Zobeide here he swore eternal ardor,
Beneath the cypress shade—at this rude altar;
As you advanc'd she sunk o'erwhelm'd with terrors;
But then a fair attendant crowd press'd on,
And bore her weeping to yon rustic roofs.

A T H A M A N D.

No more, my friend; I can endure no more—
My griefs pour in so fast, I cannot pause
To separate the tortures that surround me.
Why should she tremble when she touch'd the altar?
Ah! why indeed!—She knew my glaring crimes,
She knew an altar could not yield protection,
She saw her father most unjustly banish'd,
Herself too driv'n to these inhuman desarts,
The sum of all her woes was present to her,
And I the fatal hated cause of all.

H A S A N.

Her father—

A T H A

ATHAMAND.

Had the proud exile read my heart,
He then must have appeas'd the woes I suffer'd,
He then had pardon'd, and thou might'st have
footh'd me.

But now I rave—O pity my distraction !
The fire-ey'd transports of tyrannic love !
Hell is in ev'ry thought,—But say, my Hasan,
Did she not faintly name her native country ?

HASAN.

No doubt she still must love—

ATHAMAND.

She loves it not.

She love her native land ?—She weds a Scythian.
I see him in her arms—O hold my brain !
She twines him now with unrepining rapture.
Seize him this instant, Hasan ;
Go, cloud the honours of the fell barbarian ;
Tell him, his life shall dearly pay the price—
Crimes damn'd like these shall feel a monarch's
vengeance.

HASAN.

H A S A N.

O think, my prince, you're not at Ecbatan ;
Your voice decides not here —here you may perish ;
Are you not now within those curst domains,
Where many of your ancestors have bled ?

A T H A M A N D.

Here too I'll bleed. [*Flourish.*] What martial sounds
are those ?

Whence are these rustic troops, who, high in air,
Brandish their threat'ning spears ?

H A S A N.

Such are their sports ;
'Tis thus they celebrate the festive day,
By nature fond of valorous exploit.
But O retire ! at distance I descry
The ling'ring bride—as yet we're unobserv'd ;—
Let prudence guide you now—the time's at hand,
Remote from all, you may again behold her,
And speak the troubles of your lab'ring breast.

[*Exeunt.*]

C H O R U S.

C H O R U S.

[Returning from the altar.]

Now the Rites are all complete,
All their Views, their Actions pure,
Honour, Truth, and Reason meet,
Love created to endure.

Z O B E I D E, S U L M A.

Re-enter A T H A M A N D.

A T H A M A N D.

My life, my love! O stay, my better angel!

Z O B E I D E.

What will my fate do with me? Ah! my Sulma,
This storm will overwhelm me—'tis too much.
Cease, thou false persecuting prince;
What would'st thou add to all the woes I've
suffer'd?

A T H A M A N D.

Hear but a moment—

Z O B E I D E.

Z O B E I D E.

Ought I, barbarous man
Consider where I am, and what would Athamand?

A T H A M A N D.

By love conducted from the Persian throne,
I come to cast an empire at thy feet;
By Smerdis' death I'm lord of half the world;
I'm lord of all, if Zobeide smiles upon me.

Z O B E I D E.

What hast thou said? too cruel! Why from afar
Com'st thou to plant new troubles in my breast?
When first I listen'd to the soothing tale,
No king, enforcing Hymen's awful rites,
Had doom'd thy hand to one more worthy of thee;
But now—
Without a crime thou canst not share my heart,
Without a crime I cannot listen to thee:
Those hallow'd rites have bound my humbler
choice;
Take pity, and respect the gentle Indater—

A T H A M A N D.

A Scythian!—so low—so vile—

Z O B E I D E

Z O B E I D E.

Despise him not;
He far surpasses Athamand in virtue.

A T H A M A N D.

Who could surpass me, had I power to charm
thee?

Thy love alone would stamp immortal fame;
Thy love is fate to me—it caus'd my crimes;
And love must free me to a gazing world.

Z O B E I D E.

If thou hadst sooner felt this generous flame—
Now 'tis too late.

A T H A M A N D.

This is the pressing hour,
Fly hence, partake the glories of my reign;
O! fly with me, to dignify dominion.

Z O B E I D E.

May'st thou, remote, far, far from these sad eyes,
Behold thy reign most favour'd by the Gods!

A T H A M A N D.

I will not reign without thee—Robb'd of thee,
Empire itself's a curse.

Z O B E I D E.

Z O B E I D E.

O think!—your glory—

A T H A M A N D.

My glory 'tis to love you,

Z O B E I D E.

Ill-fated hour!

When first you swore fidelity and truth.

A T H A M A N D.

In these vile haunts, can Zobeide waste her days?

Z O B E I D E.

My days were all beset with hideous terrors,

'Till Indater became my kind protector;

If then I live a prey to fullen grief

Or wan despair—'twas Athamand's decree,

For he alone condemn'd me to the desert.

A T H A M A N D.

I sue to snatch thee hence; thy hand as yet

Has not confirm'd this most dishonour'd union.

Z O B E I D E.

I've made my vows to heav'n.

ATHAMAND.

Heav'n heard them not ;
Kind heav'n was deaf in pity to my love.

Z O B E I D E.

Think on the ills your faithless love has caus'd ;
Think I was driven from a parent soil,
Where ev'ry joy press'd onward to my wishes ;
Think what I suffer'd, when o'er trackless wastes
I wander'd all expos'd—When north winds rag'd,
And hideous monsters howl'd their fell complain-
ings:

Where can the wretched find a peaceful shelter ?
Ah ! where indeed ? When he, her only hope,
Forsook, despis'd, abandon'd, and betray'd her.

ATHAMAND.

No more, my love, at this important hour,
But melt thy father's heart with soft persuasion—
Say to him——

Z O B E I D E.

Never, O ! never—choice is made ;
I and my friends are destin'd to misfortune ;
Urg'd on by Fate, my honour shall not shrink—
Think't

Think'st thou that Seyfel ever would consent?
His long-try'd virtue shudders not at dangers.

ATHAMAND.

He is the fatal cause of all our woes.

ZOBEIDE.

Thou art alone to blame—again to see me,
Again to plead and drive me to distraction:
Leave me, my Prince—Be just to wretched Seyfel;
O! leave us here to linger out our days—
My father comes—Begone—this moment leave
me.

ATHAMAND.

No, let us bend him from his stubborn purpose.

ZOBEIDE.

I' th' name of love, by all our past misfortunes,
By all that poisons my remaining days,
Fly, nor afflict him with thy cruel presence.

ATHAMAND.

Love plays the tyrant, and commands respect.
Gods! who behold the tortures I endure,
Second my love, or guide me to my vengeance.

[Exit.

Enter

Enter SEYFEL.

SEYFEL.

This hated foe again! to glut his rage
Must I resign my life?

ZOBEIDE.

He seeks it not.

Dear father, he regards us both—But I,
Spite of his vows, would never see him *more*.

SEYFEL.

A worthy Scythian now is thine—thy choice
(For I controul'd thee not) receiv'd his homage.

ZOBEIDE.

I knew your will, and never would offend you ;
The son of Hermodon was dearest to you.

SEYFEL.

'Tis true he was—a gentle, noble youth,
Most generous and humane—And yet reflect,
There is a harshness in the Scythian manners ;
No faults, when known, escape their punishment.

ZOBEIDE.

Why should you seek to terrify my mind ?
If I have patient borne for four sad years

A weight

A weight of woes, why am I now suspected?
 I've made a sacrifice of love to duty;
 If I in aught have fail'd, I will atone;
 But will not fear a father or a husband.

SEYFEL.

Think not thy father labour'd to reproach thee—
 Thy husband was thy choice—he sure is dear:
 O may thy peace be henceforth undisturb'd!
 Give up this day to merriment and joy!
 Forget thy ills—I hasten to the festival.

[Exit Seyfel.

S U L M A.

Ah! cruel festival!—You then resolve
 To suffer joyless life in these abodes!

Z O B E I D E.

Gods! Gods!

S U L M A.

Your native country, friends, the Per-
 sian court,

A gen'rous prince—who has charm'd perhaps
 your heart—

All you abandon without fear or pity!

2

Z O B E I D E.

Z O B E I D E.

I give up all ; my destiny demands it.

S U L M A.

Can you for ever hate your court and country ?

Z O B E I D E.

Unfortunate ! they never were so dear.

S U L M A.

If I deserve it, open all your heart.

Z O B E I D E.

All there is anarchy and dread confusion,
Thy heart would bleed to know how mine's af-
flicted ;
There are all stor'd the chequer'd ills of fortune,
And greater far those ills ourselves create ;
But when with exile, shame, disgrace, they gather
And crowd so fast—after the happiest days—
When all these fierce assaults at once unite,
A heart—a feeble heart can not support them.

S U L M A.

Ecbatan—a great prince—

Z O B E I D E.

Z O B E I D E.

Ah! fatal Athamand!

What dæmon led thee here? why to discover
This dagger long conceal'd, which must destroy
me?

Ah! why renewing my disgrace—thy injuries—
Must all my former wounds now bleed afresh?

S U L M A.

No longer yield to those inhuman laws,
By which a cruel parent would enslave you;
If you're his comfort, ought he to oppress you?
Protect his age, but never be his victim;
The bravest troops which Persia's pride can
boast,
Ev'n to these forests have pursu'd your steps,
Led on by warlike Athamand—Athamand
Above all—Is he not your master?

Z O B E I D E.

No.

S U L M A.

In his fair climes high heaven gave you birth;
Hath he not pow'r to break this fatal chain,
This foul reproach to you, your prince, and
Persia?

G

What

What think you ? O return with Athamand !
 If you have long accompanied the flight
 Of an old parent—lead him back to glory !
 Let him renounce his hatred to a court ;
 Let not his stern destructive rage prevail,
 To draw down vengeance on a guiltless head !

Z O B E I D E.

I scorn thy erring counsel.—Such resolves
 Would cause much blood-shed—plunge us all in
 ruin ;
 My father would expire with grief or rage :
 In short, my fate is fixt—I'm doom'd to slav'ry—
 Time may alleviate many weighty ills,
 Or custom fortify the mind to bear them.

S U L M A.

Meanwhile you weep—with horror you review
 These barb'rous wilds, where from the pomp of
 courts
 I see you shrink a prey to want and mis'ry ;
 Repentance then may come too late to aid you ;
 What will remain, alas ! to you ?

Z O B E I D E.

Despair.

S U L M A.

SULMA.

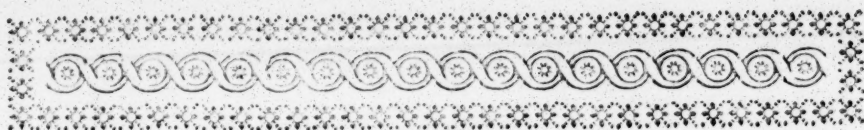
Weigh'd down with cares, what can you do?

Z O B E I D E.

My duty.

The honour to fulfil it—that evidence
Which conscience ever gives to virtuous claims,
That shall sustain me to my latest moments,
And crown these conflicts with immortal glory.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.



A C T IV.

ATHAMAND, HASAN.

ATHAMAND.

TALK not of dangers to a frantic mind—

HASAN.

You risque too much—

ATHAMAND.

What can I risque? my life!
What's life, alas! depriv'd of her I love?
My friends!—all men of fortitude and honour—
They'll instant rush on these *intrepid* warriors,
Give to the sword—

HASAN.

They'll perish at your will.

ATHAMAND.

ATHAMAND.

Oh! no; they'll conquer for me.—Who comes here?

HASAN.

'Tis he—I know him well—the savage Scythian.

ATHAMAND.

Remote from me let all my guards retire,
Let none approach without exprefs command,
But keep them ready to engage—Begone, I say.
[Exit Hasan.

Enter INDATER.

ATHAMAND.

Know'ft thou in whose prefence thou appeareft?

INDATER.

'Tis faid, a city owns in thee its mafter,
Which they call Ecbatan; from Taurus' mount
We view its haughty ramparts, rais'd by Cyrus:
'Tis faid (but there I think report's too big)
That thou can'ft raife as many fplendid troops
As we can boaft of peaceful citizens.

ATHAMAND.

ATHAMAND.

'Tis true, I have beneath me troops invincible ;
 The meanest Persian in our awful ranks
 Is richer, greater, more respectable,
 Than any whom thou'st seen in these domains,
 Where heaven levels all by indigence.

INDATER.

We envy none the glitt'ring toys of greatness ;
 Nature here lavishes her richest stores ;
 Earth grants us food ; we drink th' unfullied
 spring ;
 Our caves yield shelter, and our rocks protection.
 Daughter of heav'n, thou truly-rich Content !
 Still show'r thy blessings, who possessest all ;
 No pow'r on earth can taste of bliss without thee.

ATHAMAND.

Thy heart then owns no interested views ?
 But glory sure—

INDATER.

My life to attain it !

ATHAMAND.

Be greatly daring then—Led on by us,
 Glory shall spread her flatt'ring pinions round thee,
 And fan the gales of godlike emulation.

INDATER.

Z O B E I D E.

INDATER.

Can I descend to own thee for a master ?

ATHAMAND.

'Tis glory fure to own a generous master,
Who sets the noblest price on noblest actions :
Beneath our arms, what might not be atchiev'd ?
I've 'mong my warriors Scythians like to thee.

INDATER.

Thou hast none.—Know, that th' unworthy Scy-
thians,
Who border on thy climes, are not like us ;
Avarice has canker'd their imprison'd minds,
And lust of gold has blinded them to justice.

ATHAMAND.

Seek to advance thy countrymen to glory !
To shelter only suits the languid soul ;
Here honour withers—justice ye have none—
Come on, with me learn justice, for thou need'st it.

INDATER.

Learn justice ?

ATHAMAND.

Ay, justice, impious traitor !

Render to me the treasure thou hast stol'n;
 Render an honour'd subject to her monarch;
 A good no mortal shall deprive me of,
 And which, with justice, cannot be withheld.
 Give up, this instant, Zobeide.

INDATER.

Hah! to thee!
 To that high menace, and that haughty air!
 She is thy subject!—dar'st thou then pretend,
 That the unhappy race in Media born
 Have not the common rights of human kind?
 That man may be a slave in Media's realms
 I well consent—in Scythia he is free.
 From that blest moment Zobeide sought for shelter
 On the bleak margin of these drear domains,
 Liberty and peace, their sure associates,
 Happy equality, all life's golden blessings,
 Blessings, which Persia ravish'd from mankind,
 Blessings, by others lost, by us redeem'd,
 Were nature's claims, th' inheritance of Zobeide.

ATHAMAND.

The treasure I contend for is so great,
 I would dispute my title with the world;
 None but a king can hold the least pretence.

INDATER,

INDATER.

Shall kings controul th' eternal rights of nature?
 The free-born mind is royal of itself,
 Nor asks vain glosses from exterior grandeur.

ATHAMAND.

Thou canst but have a feeble low idea
 Of all the fury that inflames my soul;
 I would forego an empire to obtain her:
 And canst thou think to treasure such a blessing?
 The treasure's mine—renounce her, fell barbarian!

INDATER.

Imprudent stranger!—the fury of thy words
 Excites my pity, more than my resentment;
 Rude and untutor'd, new from nature's hand,
 I simply spoke my love, and Zobeide chose me:
 Fly from these blest abodes, thou feeble man!
 Thy rank, thy fortunes, give thee no protection;
 Offend not mortals ev'ry way thy equals;
 Thou art no monarch here.

ATHAMAND.

That sacred character
 Accompanies me throughout the universe;
 If I but give the word, a warlike troop,

H

Ardent

Ardent on duty, drags thee to my feet :
But I descend to thee—cast off my dignity—
Enough, I am a man—this sword sufficeth
To bring again the wealth thou'lt ravish'd from me.

INDATER.

Hah ! have we not in peace receiv'd thee here?
Giv'n thee protection—our simplicity
Strictly observ'd the rites of hospitality ;
And wouldst thou force me, on this sacred day,
To break down all, and stain me with thy blood?

ATHAMAND.

Seek not to justify a coward's fears,
Cowards are always talkative of reason—
Draw—or yield the bright reward —that honour
A monarch deigns to give thee.

INDATER.

'Tis too much :
Man cannot brook such wrongs.

ATHAMAND.

Retire this instant then—no more delay—
They may prevent us here.—Now, to decide :
Not Persia's fair dominion fires my soul,
I fight for more—much more—

INDATER.

INDATER.

For Zobeide.

And, as my cause is just, avenge, ye Pow'rs!

[Exeunt.]

Enter HERMODON, SEYFEL,
SCYTHIAN.

HERMODON.

My son, my son—let my paternal care
Lead back thy wand'ring steps—all now expect
thee:

The gentle Zobeide blames thy cold delay,
And chills the feast with tears—Ha!—is he fled?
Unlike himself he look'd—terror, methought,
Or rage sat trembling on his troubled brow.

SEYFEL.

I may conceive imaginary fears;
But, if my eyes by grief are not impair'd,
I saw the haughty Persian prince precede him.

HERMODON.]

The Persian prince?—
Imagination teems with weightiest terrors;

H 2

My

My fon is gentle—yet unfledg'd in arms—
But Athamand——

SEYFEL.

Is daring e'en to madnefs.

HERMODON.

Let's follow clofe—ah! feebleness invades
My frozen foul—my fenfes, all difmay'd,
Betray my courage—I faint, my friend—I fall—
My fon returns not yet—oh heavens! they fight—
Now, now he bleeds, perhaps——leave me this
 infant——

Affemble all our warriors to protect him!

SCYTHIAN.

Droop not, my friend--our troops ftand all prepar'd.
I hafte to lead them on—fummon thy courage!

[Exit,

SEYFEL.

O call up awful virtue to thy fuccour!

HERMODON.

Yes, I'll fupport me, Seyfel; I revive,
I feel returning ftrength.

Enter

Enter ATHAMAND (with a sword drawn)
HASAN, and PERSIANS.

ATHAMAND.

To arms, to arms!
My gen'rous friends—the times now call for
valour——
But where to find her? follow me—come on—

HERMODON.

Barbarian!—monster!

ATHAMAND.

Stop not, but obey me;
Run, I say, fly, and my intrepid guards,
If any Scythians dare but to oppose,
Rush like a tempest through the savage throng,
Hew out a way, and snatch my fair from fate!

HERMODON.

Go, ravisher!—my son shall be reveng'd
On these foul insults thou hast dar'd to offer.

ATHAMAND.

Thy son? what, Indater? He dearly pays
For all th' afflictions he has brought on me;
Thy son hath merited to feel our vengeance:
Make close the passage there——

HERMODON.

HERMODON.

Finish thy terrors—

Finish—is my son dead? ah! tell me not!

I know he is—I read it in thy looks.

Foul murderer! Ruffian! O my child, my child!

ATHAMAND.

In pity to his age, I'd spare his eyes

The mournful sight of his expiring son :

For thee, proud Seyfel, author of these ills!

Whose rigid purpose forc'd me to the combat,

For Zobeide's sake, I wish to spare thy life ;

But stay no longer, bring her to my arms—

A king demands, a kingdom to requite thee.

[Ex. Athamand with Persians,

SEYFEL.

Inhuman tyrant ! Oh day of grief and horrors !

All my misfortunes now are fall'n on thee,

And crush thee to the grave—Look up, my friend,

Haste from this fatal place--speed thee to vengeance.

HERMODON.

O lead me, Seyfel, to my dying son,

That I may close his eyes, and rest beside him ;

Then in one sepulchre enclose us both.

SEYFEL,

SEYFEL.

I will not tamely fall—to guard my child
I'll let out all my blood—take courage—hark !
I hear some martial founds—they'll nobly fight.—

HERMODON.

Our Scythians then are up—ye pitying pow'rs !
Avenge the suff'rings of an injur'd parent.

Enter Z O B E I D E in haste.

Z O B E I D E.

Ah ! whither would you fly unarm'd ?—The foes
Bear no respect to tears, to sex, or age ;
Full streams of blood on all sides are dispers'd—
From the dread tumult of this murd'rous scene
I come t' augment the horrors—thy Son expires !
Here at your feet I fall—I am the cause,
The fatal cause of these unheard-of mis'ries ;
O let your Scythians glut their rage on me ;
I bleed a willing victim to your woes.

SEYFEL.

I sacrifice my age t' appease their vengeance,
And die, my child, to save thee.

HERMODON.

HERMODON.

Why do we pause ?

I will forget my years, my exhausted strength,
And die with glory as I've liv'd with honour.

SEYFEL.

More fatal news !

Enter SCYTHIAN.

SCYTHIAN.

The conquering monarch—
I scarce have breath to speak—precedes a troop,
A chosen band—
To bear off Zobeide to the Persian court—
He threatens vengeance on the wretched Seyfel.

SEYFEL.

And wilt thou go ?

Z O B E I D E.

Think not so meanly of me ;
Think not so lightly of your daughter's virtue ;
Though Athamand has lov'd me e'en to madness,
I'll ne'er consent.—
No crown shall glitter to my dazzled sight,

No pow'r shall drag me to my native land,
To wed the guilty prince who slew my husband.

Enter H A S A N with Persians.

H A S A N.

Persians, bind Seyfel instantly in chains;
We come to guard fair Zobeide to her throne.

Z O B E I D E.

Here will I rather die, than yield me up.

S E Y F E L.

Tell your proud prince, the father and the child
Are both resolv'd—He cannot shake their virtue.

H A S A N.

The fair one must be borne this instant hence,
The prince brooks no delay—if Hermodon
Too rashly daring to oppose his will——

H E R M O D O N.

What would your prince? I've no more sons to
lose——

I fear him not—the world, the All that is,
Is nothing now to me——

I

H A S A N.

Z O B E I D E.

HASAN.

Bind him, I say.

Z O B E I D E.

Thus, on my knees, ye pow'rs, devote I swear,
 Never to take a murd'rer to my bosom !
 The noble mind fixt on its own resolves
 Meets death where'er it seeks it.

S E Y F E L.

O let me take
 A last farewell—Support yourself with firmness—
 In other climes, where vice can ne'er intrude,
 We'll meet again, my child, to part no more.

[Exeunt Persians with Seyfel.

Z O B E I D E.

My father ! Oh ! my father !—a moment stay.—

Enter S C Y T H I A N S.

S C Y T H I A N.

At length we have prevail'd.

H E R M O D O N.

Gods ! I thank ye :
 My son shall be reveng'd—Can this be true ?

SCYTHIAN.

Heav'n restores justice, and the Scythians conquer;
Half of the Persians now await their deaths,
The others are retiring to the woods.

HERMODON.

The murd'rer of my son—has he escap'd?

SCYTHIAN.

What the fierce Athamand?
Dispensing manfully his blows around him
Upon our stoutest chiefs—at length he fell:
All gash'd with wounds, raving on Zobeide still,
Daring in death, they drag him on in chains.

HERMODON.

Let us have full revenge—I will not stay—
We'll execute to th' rigour of our law,
Th' inviolable law, which rules our country.

Z O B E I D E.

What law?

SCYTHIAN.

See, see, they bring the haughty prince.

Enter ATHAMAND in chains, with PERSIANS.

ATHAMAND.

Scythians, I'm conquer'd, and I yield to fate;
But e'er you lead a monarch to a dungeon,
Let me behold the object of my love!
The rage of love has dragg'd me to my ruin:
Forgetting Glory, and the pride of empire,
I left a world to raise her to my throne.
O! cast one look of pity on your prince:
These wounds may claim one transient gleam of
 mercy,
One sympathizing—Ha! she melts in tears.

HERMODON.

Drag him this instant hence—We will have vengeance.

ATHAMAND.

Villains, stand off, give me a moment's pause,
For I will grasp her in these eager arms
'Till life expiring—

HERMODON.

All requests are vain.

ATHAMAND.

ATHAMAND.

Hew, hack my flesh, ye slaves!—but Zobeide—

[Exeunt all but Zobeide.]

Z O B E I D E.

Oh! insupportable—Confusion! tortures!——

The Gods had stor'd their vengeance to this hour,
And thus it bursts in cataracts upon me.

Can I forget my prince? But what was Indater?

Ah! what indeed?—the gentlest, best of men.

And what is Athamand?—Support me, Heav'n!

Or shield me from the horrors that surround me.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.



A C T V.



HERMODON, ZOBEIDE, SEYFEL,
SCYTHIANS.

ZOBEIDE.

WHY do ye pause? Proclaim your Scythian
law,

Nor fear to add new terrors to my soul:

What means this dreadful solemn preparation?

SEYFEL.

My child—I scarce can speak—behold the altar
Which I this morn adorn'd with nuptial wreaths,
With mournful emblems strew'd ere set of sun.

HERMODON.

Th' inviolable law which rules our country,
Demands the widow'd fair to sacrifice,

In

In presence of the Gods, the murderer's blood ;
That Hymen's flame may be the flame of vengeance ;
That the lov'd manes of her injur'd husband,
The shade that hovers o'er this mournful land,
To purer air may take its happier flight,
Replume its wing, and waft its way to bliss.

Z O B E I D E.

Am I to sacrifice ? Ah ! whom ?—my father !——

HERMODON.

Heav'n hath reserv'd this bloody minister.

[Presents a dagger.]

SCYTHIAN.

Thy glory sure demands——

S E Y F E L.

You may revere

That law your ancestors did consecrate ;
But danger follows—Persia will be fear'd—
Big clouds impend, the gathering furies roar,
Yourself are shipwreck'd in the storm you raise.

SCYTHIAN.

Let the swollen tempest rage—yet undismay'd,
Scythians shall dare to cope with Persian valour.

HERMODON.

HERMODON.

No time to waver now—delay offends—
Your husband's murder cries to heaven for vengeance.

Z O B E I D E.

O people! hear me speak:
I was in Persia born, and am a stranger
To those harsh laws which bind these ruder climes:
Athamand is valiant—
A valiant chief would never stoop to murder—
Scythians, ye know the worth of godlike courage!
My husband bled beneath a conqueror's arm:
Justice ye surely prize as well as vengeance:
Weigh and resolve—Say, is it mine to strike?
To plunge my guilty hands in sacred blood,
And kill a warrior, who is still my king?

HERMODON.

And kill a warrior!—If thy too timid hand,
Rejecting ev'ry claim of rightful marriage,
The holy ties of gratitude and love,
Shall hesitate to make this expiation—
Dread the rough maxims of an injur'd state.

Z O B E I D E.

Z O B E I D E.

But, if the weakness of my sex prevail,
And I, o'ercome with terror, should refuse—

S C Y T H I A N.

He shall expire beneath the sharpest tortures.

Z O B E I D E.

You then demand a victim slain by me?

H E R M O D O N.

Reject not Scythia's law.

Z O B E I D E.

(*After a pause*) I accept it.

[Takes the dagger.]

H E R M O D O N.

Dar'ft thou, in prefence of th' immortal Gods,
Confirm this oath?

Z O B E I D E.

I swear it, cruel men !
I swear it, Hermodon : Ye thirst for blood ;
Be fure ye have enough ; but 'till the hour,

K

Ye

Ye lead a monarch to your barb'rous altars,
In mercy keep him from my tortur'd sight ;
Meanwhile, I would some counsel from my father ;
Then act your wills, I patiently resign.

SCYTHIAN.

Let us retire, my friends.

HERMODON.

The widow'd fair one
Declares herself submissive to our law ;
My deep-felt grief will somewhat be appeas'd,
If hands like those submit to give us vengeance.

[Ex. Hermodon and Scythians.]

SEYFEL.

There was a time, when through the daring
prince
I would have stabb'd a guilty monarch's heart ;
Now pity pleads aloud for the unfortunate,
And fierce resentments languish in regret.

Z O B E I D E.

How could you dive into my inmost thoughts,
And read each varying struggle of my soul ?

SEYFEL.

I fain would weep thy gen'rous husband's fate ;
But now, alas ! I feel alone for thee !
This rash detested oath !

Z O B E I D E.

You see the altar—
Should I refuse, you know what torments wait
him ;
After this fatal blow—and all our sufferings,
O say—will you too sink upon his tomb ?

SEYFEL.

I there would die.

Z O B E I D E.

No, live—I charge you live ;
The gallant Persians will revenge this outrage,
The youths of Ecbatan to Scythia's wilds,
From Taurus will descend with winged speed,
Will, like a torrent, pour their rapid force,
And drive these monsters from their rocky
fastness.

SEYFEL.

Alas ! I greatly fear—

Ye lead a monarch to your barb'rous altars,
In mercy keep him from my tortur'd fight ;
Meanwhile, I would some counsel from my father ;
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SEYFEL.

Alas ! I greatly fear—

Z O B E I D E.

Talk not of fear,
 It is allied to guilt—we will not fear;
 'Tis true, the gross inhabitants of Scythia
 Are savage, cruel—not invincible.
 But, oh ! meanwhile, by every awful tie,
 Secure the pardon of our captive friends ;
 E'en as the victim bleeds, let all be free,
 And pass the mountains under faith of treaty.

S E Y F E L.

Affure thyself, my child, I will obtain it—
 And yet this treaty serves but to confound me,
 The prince no less will perish at the altar—
 The Persians will not rouse but to avenge him.

Z O B E I D E.

I've weigh'd my destiny, and all's resolv'd.

S E Y F E L.

I freeze with horror.

Z O B E I D E.

Go, I partake it all.

The time is precious, leave me to summon strength:
 In solemn suit invoke each conscious being
 To bear eternal record to the vow.

You

You firmly urge, not Scythians dare renounce
This dread recognizance from earth to heav'n.

SEYFEL.

I go, but fore opprest with ills like these;
Whate'er's decreed, my doom is fixt despair.

[Exit.

Z O B E I D E.

How long must I restrain this storm of grief—
Nor greater sure inflicted by the Gods!
My Sulma comes—and I unload my heart.

Enter S U L M A.

S U L M A.

And do we meet again! What scenes of blood
Since last we parted! O! let us part no more,
'Till fate hath finish'd its last cruel edict.

Z O B E I D E.

Thou yet must see a far more piteous fight.

S U L M A.

More piteous fight!—Zobeide will ne'er submit
To satiate savage minds with guilty slaughter?

Z O B E I D E.

Z O B E I D E.

Think'st thou that I'll complain to Scythian monsters?

Complain to seas, to rocks, to steel, or adamant —
For them I left a people most renown'd,
Sometimes unjust—but polish'd, great, and generous.

Shall I complain to Scythians?—Nations! Earth!
O kings! What outrage? Gods! Masters of
thunder!

Unite with me.—

Let Death stalk uncontroul'd till Taurus' high
He heap on heap, piles mountains of the slain.
What means this frantic rage? vain, vain regrets!
These imprecations serve but to distract me;
O, Rage! what art thou? flatterer of a moment,
A short-liv'd passion, preying on thyself,
I sink thy slave—I feel thy deadly power,
Thou fixt eternal foe to steady virtue.

S U L M A.

Let Reason's balmy breath assuage your griefs,
You're not reduc'd to serve their cruel purpose.

Z O B E I D E.

Then Athamand must share the bitterest tortures.

S U L M A.

SULMA.

But, oh ! that secret love, which ardent pleads—

Z O B E I D E.

Shall ever plead—How can I then resolve
To plunge a dagger in a monarch's heart,
Who came to lay his empire at my feet ?

SULMA.

'Tis so abhorr'd a crime—the guilty Scythians,
Whose barb'rous altars reek with human blood ;
Ah ! did they know your love—would stay your
 hand,
Arm'd to destroy him.

Z O B E I D E.

No, they would urge the deed ;
Such are their cruel hearts—Such, such is man,
By simple nature kind, nay oft times good,
But if provok'd, his vengeance is unbounded.

SULMA.

The wretched Seyfel to these Scythians bound
In closest leagues of amity—link'd with them,
Let him bear out the ills he solely caus'd.

Z O B E I D E.

Z O B E I D E.

Too much for me he suffers—I only wish
 To weed each rankling poison from his breast,
 Not add new troubles to his rev'rend age :
 But, O ye Pow'rs! attend his last request,
 Bend the stern purpose of this rustic senate,
 Confirm th' important oath—heal Persia's woes,
 Nor force me act a deed yourselves abhor.

S U L M A.

You now give life to my affrighted sense.

[Solemn music at a distance.]

Z O B E I D E.

Those solemn sounds proclaim th' eventful hour,
 And summon me to more than death—trembling
 I stand the shock—revisit mortal clime
 Spirits of good! if when in fleshly mould
 Something ye knew of what I now endure,
 Aid my firm labours—in a righteous cause
 'Tis yours to succour;—And if your suppliant acts
 Obedient to your wills—reward the deed;—
 Twine round my brow the wreaths of brightest
 fame,
 Laurels which fade not, gems which can't decay.

[Dead march.]

S C E N E

S C E N E the last.

HERMODON, SEYFEL, ZOBEIDE,
SCYTHIANS.

First SCYTHIAN.

Hail to the shadowy grove, whose deep-felt gloom
Still adds new horrors to this awful scene !
Guard round the rustic altar, worthy friends,
Lest footsteps rude invade these hallow'd haunts,
Or brawling noise profane the solemn hour.

HERMODON.

Sure here some secret unknown Pow'r resides,
Whose eye pervades, and well approves this
 offering ;
At this dread hour he sits in mystic state,
And chills the soul with awe and veneration.

ZOBEIDE.

What Power can here reside of good to man ?
These are the favour'd haunts of dim Despair,
Of fire-ey'd Madness, or sunk Melancholy ;
Here Murder prowls—here, when that witch the
 Night,
High pois'd in air, performs her secret rites,
And spreads her baneful mantle o'er the skies.

L

HERMODON.

HERMODON.

Misdeem us not, if when stern Justice calls,
 We rigidly obey its awful summons;
 A murder'd son demands this expiation;
 'Tis due to us, to him, to heav'n, and vengeance.

First SCYTHIAN.

Nor vengeance dearer than our country's law.

Z O B E I D E.

Enough, enough—swear but by every power,
 The blood of all my countrymen is sacred,
 And this fell hand submits to give you vengeance.

SCYTHIAN.

All shall be spar'd we swear,—th' immortal Gods
 Ne'er saw a Scythian violate his oath.
 Now lead him to the altar.

Z O B E I D E.

A moment stay——

Yet why should terror more pervade my heart?
 I scorn the woman in me—Lead him on—
 I'll firmly brave this thunder-bolt of heaven.

S E Y F E L.

And do I live to this—O teeming earth!
 Ope thy wide jaws in mercy to receive me!

S U L M A.

SULMA.

Inexorable fortune!

Enter ATHAMAND guarded.

ATHAMAND.

Dear Zobeide!

Take—take the steel; let thy uplifted hand
Pierce a fond heart, devote to thee alone;
Preserve the honour'd lives of all my friends,
Give me my death, I unrepining fall;
I kiss the trembling hand which fearful strikes,
Nor think it ruin to be so destroy'd,
To bleed for Zobeide and my orphan'd country.

Z O B E I D E.

O stop this torrent of o'erwhelming goodness,
My generous, cruel prince!—words arm'd like
these

Unnerve my feeble hand, and quite subdue me;
Breathe sharpest curses, sting me to my purpose;
Distract me not with tender protestations,
Nor vanquish courage with such kind endearments.

ATHAMAND.

Yet hear me speak the source of each misfortune,
And tho' too late, assert my injur'd honour;

L 2

Smerdis,

Smerdis, to add new firmness to his throne,
 Urg'd me to wed the daughter of a king
 Nearest allied in empire and dominion,
 But, oh! my heart was fixt on thee alone.
 Not daring openly to thwart his will,
 I seemingly consented—but determin'd
 Instant with previous nuptials to prevent it;
 I seemingly consented—accursed hour!
 'Twas then report bore on its rapid wing
 The shameful tale of my ill-seeming purpose;
 And ere my trusty friends could search thee out,
 And tell each fearful oath I'd sworn to Heav'n,
 Thy fears betray'd thee to believe me false,
 Thy fears, alas! had driv'n thee from thyself,
 And borne thee far from me, from peace and Persia.

Z O B E I D E.

And was thy purpose just?—What then am I?
 Thy truth to me has dragg'd thee to thy ruin;
 Thou fixt aloft, triumphant on a throne,
 Lov'd by the people, favour'd by the Gods,
 Wide as the sun had'st spread thy blessings round
 thee;
 But, oh! I've hurl'd thee from the giddy height,
 And plung'd thee deep in guilt, and endless
 mis'ries.

The

The groans of all my country plead against me,
Ill-omen'd visions fright my mad'ning brain,
And furies ring a knell of dire prefages.

HERMODON.

The impatient hour reproves our long delay.

SEYFEL.

O! let me kneel before my honour'd prince—

SCYTHIAN.

Away; dost thou too—

HERMODON.

We will not pause; proceed—

ZOBEIDE.

Infatiate monsters! stay—ye know not, sure,
The guilt ye would enforce—Athamand is my
Prince;

Nay more, for I adore him—I here avow
My secret love—I here declare my passion—
I here abjure those nuptials which have bound me.

ATHAMAND.

I die content.

HERMODON.

HERMODON.

What means this frantic woe?

Nature herself is sick at thy lamentings.

Z O B E I D E.

When Scythians fall, no stars withdraw their blaze,

An atom sinks unheeded—unregarded—

But O! thy fate drinks dry a nation's eyes,

All Persia sinks one great stupendous ruin,

And I become the murderer of a world.

A T H A M A N D.

This kind embrace o'er pays whole years of anguish;

Blest in thy love, I leave the world to fate.

Z O B E I D E.

Long has the captive worn the galling chain,

But now to hail the dawn of rising joys,

To view some holier land where mercy reigns,

Where peace shall bloom with blessings ever new;

Hail, happy land!—there, there again to rest,

Where man can not oppress, or I offend him;

Spare but his life, and thus to finish mine.

[Stabs herself.]

O live, my prince! thus dying I entreat thee.

HERMODON.

HERMODON.

Zobeide!

SEYFEL,

My child!

SULMA.

My ever honor'd friend!

HERMODON.

Take off his chains, we grant his rated life.

ATHAMAND.

Talk'ft thou of life to one all gash'd with wounds,
Torn on the wheel, or struggling in his tortures,
His limbs all mangled, or his heart destroy'd?
No, no, this reeking steel from Zobeide's wound
Prevents the greater curse. [Kills himself.

Z O B E I D E.

Then all is lost.—

Nor e'en my death can expiate these difasters.
Thou who alone can'ft judge the feeble heart,
At length look pitying on me——
Whilst these faint accents languish on my tongue,
Whilst life ftands trembling on the brink of fate
I fain would plead—but thou art juft—tho' I am—
[Dies.

ATHAMAND.

ATHAMAND.

The struggle's past, and the world sinks before me;
Extend your mercy to my sole request!
Let one small spot enclose our last remains,
'Tis all I ask, and Persia will requite you.
What now is all the baseless dream of power,
Ambition's fire, the lust of wealth or empire?
The scene once clos'd, each glittering prospect
fails—

The dreary mansions of the peaceful grave
Receive alike the Scythian and the Monarch.
Now, now I sink—my Zobeide—mercy, Heaven!
[Dies.

HERMODON.

Bear off my wretched friend—woes great as these
Press heavy on his years—Submit we to our fate;
Submit we to the stern award of awful heaven;
My son, my country, and the Gods appeas'd,
Mercy usurps the rigid seat of justice,
And weeps in mournful tribute o'er their graves.

END OF THE FIFTH ACT.

EPILOGUE.

By Mr. MURPHY.

Spoken by Mrs. YATES.

*WELL fare the man, peace to his gentle shade,
The Bard who first made Epilogues a trade;
Else what a life an Actress must pursue?—
To weep and rave is all she'd have to do;
Upon the Stage, with warring passions sore,
“To fret her hour, and then be heard no more.”*

*Now, after poison, daggers, rage, and death,
We come again to take a little breath;
Rally the Pit; set Belles and Beaux at odds,
And be a mere free-thinker to the Gods; [To the upper
Chat in familiar strain; the Boxes maul; gallery.
—An Epilogue, like gaming—levels all.*

*Not e'en poor Bayes within must hope to be
Free from the lash:—His Play he writ for me,
'Tis true—and now my gratitude you'll see.*

M

Why

EPILOGUE,

*Why ramble with Voltaire to Eastern climes,
To Scythian laws, and antiquated times?
Change but the names, his Tragedy, at best,
Slides into Comedy, and turns to jest.*

*As thus—A Statesman, old, and out of place,
Sour, discontented, malice in his face,
(In these blest days, we but suppose the case)
Flies from St. James's to his own estate,
To chew the wisdom of each past debate;
How in the House he made a glorious stir,
With, "Sir, I move"—and, "Mr. Speaker, Sir!"
Zobeide's his daughter Sophy:—Oh! farewell
For her each haunt that charms a modern Belle!
Adieu Almack's! Cornelly's Masquerade!
Sweet Ranelagh! Vauxhall's enchanting shade!
Squire Groom makes love; Rich? yes; a vast domain;
Well-bred?—the savage Scythian of the Plain!
The match is fix'd; deeds sign'd; the knot is ty'd;
Down comes my Lord in all his glitt'ring pride.
And will my Angel chuse this rustic plan?
"Oh! Cuckold him by all means; I'm your man."
Now mark our Author's ignorance of life?
What, not elope? Is that a modish Wife?*

Paen

EPILOGUE.

*Poor fool ! she doubts ; says No : the Husband dies ;
Now stab yourself, says Bayes ; but Nature cries,
How ! sacrifice myself for vain Renown !
John, put the horses to, and drive to town.
That would be life ; the manners ; painted high !
But our Bard makes,—to moisten ev'ry eye,
A Widow with a Prince refuse to fly.*

*Yet, after all, excuse him, Ladies, pray ;
For sure there is some Nature in his Play.
A first attempt let no keen Censure blight,
Hereafter he may soar a nobler flight ;
Drop one kind tear ; give him that slender token ;
And hither come, till the Pantheon open.*

FINIS.



